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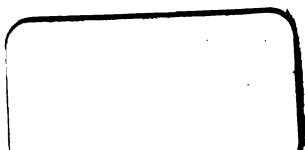
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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL,

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Received Nov. 14, 1891.



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with the cordial esteem of
Frank Dandridge

Jan. 12th. 1884

JOY

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

Miss (Bedinger)
DANSKE DANDRIDGE

mc
NEW YORK & LONDON
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
The Knickerbocker Press
1888

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Nov. 14, 1891,

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1888

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Press of
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
New York

THE RAINBOW.

TO A. S. D.

We are akin, dear soul :
Akin as are the rainbow in the sky,
The runnel on the knoll :
We are akin in spirit, you and I.

Ah ! how serene and bright !
You stand with shining feet,
And lustrous arch complete
Of rounded life upon the cloudy height :

You catch the light of Heaven and repeat
All its transcendent splendor in your face,
And beautify a place
With radiance of a glory and a grace.

Thus is your life, O soul !
But I am like the stream
That hurries down the knoll,
As changeful as a dream :
As restless and as wild
As an impatient child :
Yet thankful, dear, if in some tranquil space,
I may reflect the radiance of your face.

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JOY
AND OTHER POEMS

JOY

Ah ! did I dream ?

Methought I wandered by a pleasant
stream

Whose shaded course through mint and
mosses wound,

Where little talking springlets did abound :
Bright, many-jewelled singers flashed
above,

And sang wise hymns in praise of Joy and
Love.

As thus I moved, my heart grew feather-
light :

Care shrunk away as shrinks the huddling
Night,

That sees the rosy finger of the Dawn
Lifted in laughing menace, and is gone.

Grief rustled by me like the frightened
snake,
Stirring the dry leaves of the under-brake ;
And had I companied with pinched De-
spair
Her lines had dimpled into laughter there.

Ah ! did I dream ?

I found a little glade
For meditation and retirement made :
Strange tropic trees and shrubs were there
for shade,
With ancient oaks that dream of days of
yore,
And many a lithe and white-armed sycam-
ore.
All these were 'broidered o'er with rich de-
vice
Of patterned tints, set as with fingers nice,

Draped with great vines and bloom of
 myriad hue,
Bright gold, vermillion, silver, rose, and blue;
Through which, as through a chapel's
 stained glass,
The sunbeams thronged to pass,
Grew faint, and swooned, and fell upon the
 grass.

Here glanced the waters of a little lake
Where lay a radiant spirit, half-awake,
Upon a lily-leaf, her rocking couch ;
While orchids wafted from each jewelled
 pouch
Rich odors downward, and a roseate flower
Of the Victoria opened every hour.

Ah ! did I dream ?
The vision roused, and gaily poisoning o'er

Each floating leaf, came lightly to the
shore,
And greeted me with smiling lips apart,
And as she smiled her beauty filled my
heart ;
And swiftly, swiftly, as a homing dove,
From her sweet eyes to mine her spirit
came.
She did not need to breathe her happy
name,
I felt that she was Joy whose mate is Love,
And mother Peace. She shook her loosened
hair,
That made a shining circle round her
head ;
But I: "Dear Joy !" I cried, "what do
you here,
While weary men and women curse and
moan,

And pine away, and sin, and hate, and jeer ;
What do you, idling, with closed wings,
alone ? ”

Ah, me ! she spoke, and sighed, if Joy can
sigh :

“ Scant welcome in the homes of men have I,
It is a time of doubting and unrest,
And Greed doth drive me forth from many
a breast.

Alas ! I have an ancient enemy,
Whose robes are tinsel, and her face a lie ;
Men call her Pleasure, but I know her twin
Is Pain ; their age, Remorse ; their shadow,
Sin.”

She ceased ; then smiled, and whispered :
“ Oft I come
To this entrancing spot, my blithest home.

Hither I bring young children, fast asleep,
And dreamy youths, and pretty maids who
keep

Their early innocence, and I have elves,
Who in these pleasaunces disport themselves ;

Speeding in dance the merry moonlit hours,
And deftly training all my vines and flowers."

Again she ceased, and shook her golden
crown,

And beckoned to a little roaming breeze,
And I, become as light as thistle-down,
Up-blown, was wafted o'er the distant
trees,

I know not how.

Ah ! did I dream ?

I never saw them more,

That glade, that lakelet and its bloomy
shore.

Now is late August, and the Virgin stands
And drops her gleanings from warm, languid hands ;

From thistle-heads the loving goldfinch
sings ;

Young birds that late were nestlings try
their wings ;

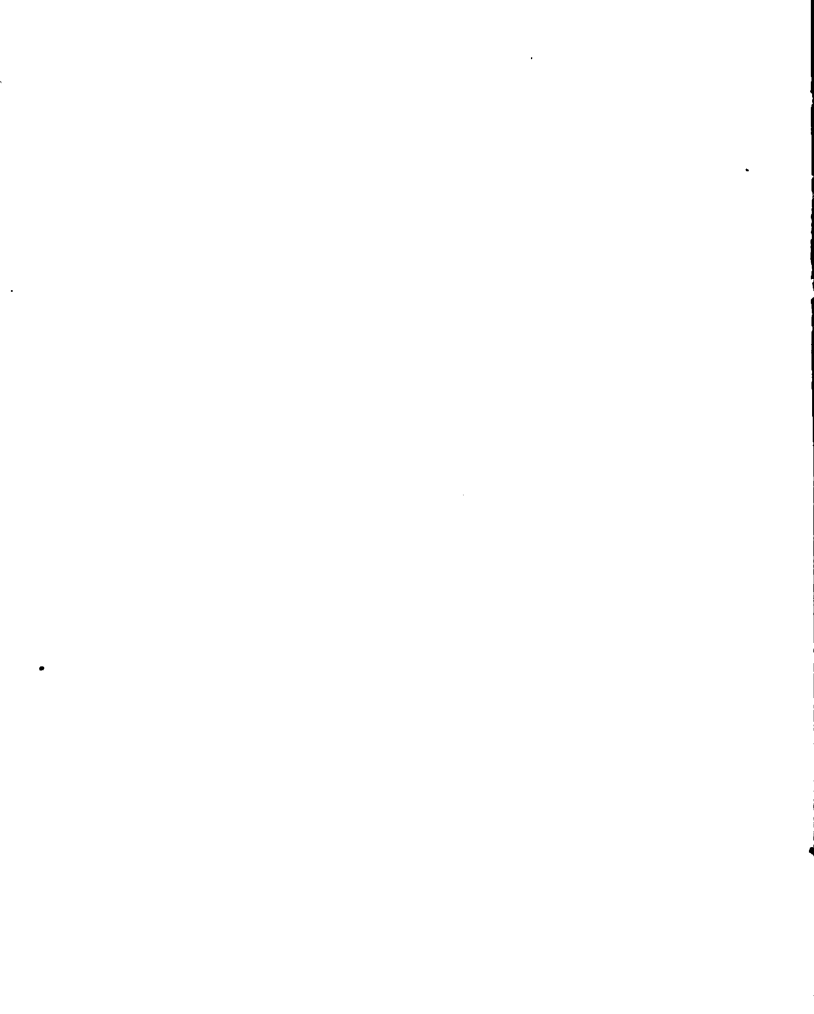
And sometimes, when I watch the moon
arise,

I seem to see those glad and childlike
eyes.

Tending my borders in the fading light,
I heard light-hearted laughter, yesternight ;—

And e'en to-day I caught the transient
gleam

Of iridescent pinions : did I dream ?



WITH THE YEAR

THE DEAD MOON.

DEDICATED TO MR. STEPHEN LANGLEY.

I.

We are ghost-ridden :
Through the deep night
Wanders a spirit,
Noiseless and white.
Loiters not, lingers not, knoweth not rest ;
Ceaselessly haunting the East and the West.

She, whose undoing the ages have wrought,
Moves on to the time of God's rhythmical
thought.
In the dark, swinging sea,
As she speedeth through space,

She reads her pale image ;
The wounds are agape on her face.
She sees her grim nakedness
Pierced by the eyes
Of the Spirits of God
In their flight through the skies.
(Her wounds, they are many and hollow.)
The Earth turns and wheels as she flies,
And this Spectre, this Ancient, must follow.

II.

When, in the æons,
Had she beginning ?
What is her story ?
What was her sinning ?
Do the ranks of the Holy Ones
Know of her crime ?
Does it loom in the mists
Of the birthplace of Time ?

The stars, do they speak of her
Under their breath,
“ Will this Wraith be forever
Thus restless in death ? ”
On, through immensity,
Sliding and stealing,
On, through infinity,
Nothing revealing.

III.

I see the fond lovers :
They walk in her light :
They charge the “ soft maiden ”
To bless their love-plight.
Does she laugh in her place,
As she glideth through space ?
Does she laugh in her orbit with never a
sound ?
That to her, a dead body,

With nothing but rents in her round ;
 Blighted and marred ;
 Wrinkled and scarred ;
 Barren and cold ;
 Wizened and old ;
 That to her should be told,
That to her should be sung
The yearning and burning of them that are
 young ?

IV.

Our Earth that is young,
 That is throbbing with life,
Has fiery upheavals,
 Has boisterous strife ;
But she that is dead has no stir, breathes
 no air ;
She is calm, she is voiceless, in lonely despair.

v.

We dart through the void :
 We have cries, we have laughter :
The phantom that haunts us
 Comes silently after.
This Ghost-lady follows,
 Though none hear her tread ;
On, on, we are flying,
 Still tracked by our Dead ;
By this white, awful Mystery,
 Haggard, and dead.

TO A BLUEBIRD IN FEBRUARY.

I hear the bluebird's quaint soliloquy ;
 A hesitating note upon the breeze,
Blown faintly from the tops of distant
 trees,
As though he were not sure that spring is
 nigh
But fed his hopes with hints of melody.
 I would I had a spirit-harp to seize
 The bolder tenor of his rhapsodies
When apple-blossoms swing against the
 sky.
On every dark or blust'ring wintry day
That airy harp the bluebird's lilt should
 play ;
And as I held my sighs and paused to hear,

TO A BLUEBIRD IN FEBRUARY. 19

The wandering message, with its full-fed
cheer,
And ripe contentment, to my life should
bring
The essence and fruition of the spring.

THE RED-BIRD.

What wealth is in your ruddy throat.
O bugler of the scarlet coat !
As rollicking and bold as erst,
I hear the silver clarion-burst
With which you herald in the Spring
To tourney with the Winter-king,
Whose gauntlet falls with ringing sound
Of challenge on the frosty ground.
About the breezy battle-plain,
“ Right here ! Right here ! ” you cry
 amain.

The Spring, a lusty, green-clad knight,
With rondels pricking into fight,
Still bears his flower-wreathed lance in
 rest
To pierce his foeman's ice-mailed breast.

And when old Winter's jewelled sword
Lies shattered on the trampled sward,
And when you see the foeman fall,
How blithe shall ring your bugle-call
Of "Io ! Io ! Victory !
Now all the serf-bound streams are free ! "

THE MATELESS BIRD.

Full half a warm and budding day
Within a little grove I lay ;
And still, from noon to evening's fall,
I heard a lonely wood-bird call.
He wandered south, he wandered north,
With restless flitting back and forth ;
And still his tender, 'plaining cry
 Smote on my sympathizing ear ;
And still I marked him fluttering by,
 Now hurrying on, now pausing near.
The happy birds, the boughs among,
 Were singing blithely as could be,
Love's bliss the theme of every song ;
 But still that pensive melody
Upon the tranquil air would float,
A sweetly melancholy note.

At last for that one sound of woe
I felt my foolish eyes o'erflow,
I pitied so the birdling's grief ;
And thus, to give my heart relief,
"Poor bird," I cried, "can this thing be ?
Has Nature been unfair to thee,
And left thee, single and forlorn,
From dawn to eve disconsolate,
Thy only task thy fate to mourn
Fore-doomed to live without a mate ?

"Nay, little one, it is not so ;
Somewhere, in some secluded spot,
There mourns a little bird, I know,
As discontented with her lot.
Flit on, sad heart, flit east and west,
With cries still ease thy burdened breast ;
Fly on, fly on ; fly far and fast ;
For thou shalt find thy mate at last."

APRIL.

AN INVITATION.

Come browse with me along the lane.
With April freshness in your heart,
And April breezes in the brain
To blow the buds of thought apart.

The brook that stumbles o'er the stones
Is wid'ning all his silver scope,
And sings, with April in his tones,
A running song of youth and hope.

He runs to meet the glancing rill
Amid her cresses cool and green,
Who lingers, smiling, coy, and still,
Half-veiled beneath a cowslip screen.

Just here the mountain currant grows,
With spicy odors rich as meth ;
Just here the slender blood-root blows,
And shy arbutus wandereth.

When Autumn winds his mellow horn,
With pensive sweetness in its tone ;
And leaves are flitting down forlorn,
Then pace the thinning aisles alone.

But when the bluebird wins his mate,
And singingswells the thrasher's breast;
Then saunter down the lanes, elate,
Beside the friend that loves you best.

THE PALE PRIMROSE.

It is the early morning, and the air
Quivers as though a spirit passing there,
Fanned with his unseen wings the garden
 bed,
And light and sweetness from his pinions
 shed.

Grouped in the border, pale and faintly
 sweet,
The dear primroses spring, as though his feet,
Pressing the earth, had left a heavenly sign,
Tokens and hints of loveliness divine.

Humbly I bend upon the greening sod
To welcome thus the latest gift from God,
 That was not yesterday and is to-day.
My soul illumined that was dull ere-while,

As one who basks beneath a holy smile.

Scattering beauty, on his onward way
I seem to see the Spirit of the flowers
Lightly adorning this old world of ours ;
Touching the brown mold gently, here and
there,
That wakes to love beneath his tender care;
Smiles in brave colors, breathes in rich perfume,
And welcomes Summer in a burst of bloom.

The lilacs bend against the ruined wall ;
The pear-tree's snowy petals softly fall,
And make a dainty carpet for my feet :
O heart, was ever morning half so sweet !
All the fresh primroses are steeped in bliss,
The sunlight thrills them like a tender kiss ;
And the old garden seems a sacred place,
Where I have gazed upon an angel's face.

DESIRE.

AN APRIL IDYL.

Come, dear Desire, and walk with me ;
We 'll gather sweets, and rob the bee ;
Come, leave the dimness of your room,
 We 'll watch, how since the morning rain
The spider sitteth at her loom,
 To weave her silken nets again.
I know a field where bluets blow
 Like frost from fingers of the night,
And in a sheltered coppice grow
 Arbutus trailers, blush and white.

She leaves the room and walks with me
Where dance the leaflets airily ;
Across the stile and o'er the grass,
And down the shaded copse we pass.

What sweeter bliss beneath the sun
Than through the wooded ways to go
With her whose heart is almost won,
And let the fulness overflow !

Her voice is ringing clear and blithe,—
I mark her motions, free and lithe ;
Sometimes the briers that lift her dress
Reveal the ankle's gracefulness.
The flowers, on which she will not tread,
Pay homage with each nodding head,
As though the Lady May, their queen,
Were lightly pacing o'er the green.

The bluebird to my suit gives heed ;
The wood-thrush warbles me good-speed ;
And every bird in every tree,
That peeps at her and peers at me,
Sings loud encouragement and long,
And bids us welcome in his song.

Kind stones, I thank you for your grace
I bless each wet and marshy place ;
Low pile of logs and fallen fence,
I owe ye twain a recompense,
With prostrate tree and matted vine ;
Each bar that gives occasion sweet
To hold her supple hand in mine,
And teach her where to place her feet.

See, my Desire, the mossy nook
Where grows the pink anemone ;
I 'll kindly lift you o'er the brook,
And 'neath the dropping dog-wood tree
We 'll sit and watch the mating birds,
And put their wooing into words.

O downcast eyes ! O tender glow !
O little hand that trembles so !
O throbbing heart and fluttering breast!
O timid passion, half confessed !

We hear and scarcely know we hear
The red-bird whistle bold and clear ;
Beneath the blooming dog-wood bough
The moments pass, we know not how,
Till day is on her burning pyre,
And I have won my heart's Desire.

PEGASUS

O steep a poet in the sun,
And bathe a singer in the blue,
And bring, to solace such an one,
Fresh, honeyed draughts of clover dew !
Then let a song for soothing float
From out the hermit thrush's throat.
Upon a mountain side apart,
Where blows no breath of earthly care,
There let him cheer his gentle heart,
And drink him drunk with mountain air.
Perchance, before the day be past,
The wingèd horse may come at last,
And lightly curvet o'er the hill,
Then stand to learn the master's will.
Or if he wait till comes the night,
Until the lady moon arise,

And sleepy starlets blink their eyes,
And whippoorwills begin to call,
There 'll be such rambles through the skies;
Such antics on his upward flight ;
Such caracoles fantastical ;
Such circlings wild and swift and strong,
As ne'er were set in mortal song !

O Pegasus ! if I might be
Upon the mountain slope with thee :
And might I share thy sweeping flight,
And gambols in the mystic light ;
Or through the airy pastures wind,
With speed that leaves the breeze behind,
To join the starry company,
'T were happiness enough for me.

THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND

THE END OF THE WORLD
IS AT HAND
AND THE PEOPLE OF SNOW
ARE AT THE DOOR

THE END OF THE WORLD
IS AT HAND
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SPIRIT AND WOOD SPARROW. 35

There was no ear
Or far or near,
Save one small sparrow of the wood,
That song to hear.
This, in a bosky tree,
Heard all, and understood
As much as a small sparrow could
By sympathy.

'T was a fair sight
That morn of Spring,
When on the lonely height,
The spirit paused to sing,
As rough the air took flight
Ting on the wing.
The shy bird,
Whom I had heard,
Atway began
To trill o'er the lovely strain ;

36 · *SPIRIT AND WOOD SPARROW.*

Again, again ;
Though indistinct and blurred,
He tried each word,
Until he caught the last far sounds that fell
Like the faint tinkles of a fairy bell.

Now when I hear that song,
Which has no earthly tone,
My soul is carried with the strain along
To the everlasting Throne ;
To bow in thankfulness and prayer,
And gain fresh faith, and love, and
patience, there.

THE LOVER IN THE WOODS.

Gauzy veil of gossamere,
Dew-embroidered, gemmed, and sheer
 Thrown about the woodland ways ;
Fabric meet for fairy brides,
That the flushed arbutus hides
 From the careless seeker's gaze :
Faces shy that smile and peep,
Drowsy from a winter's sleep :
By each timid, dewy eye,
That reflects the new-washed sky
By your bees that suck and fly ;
By your time of beauty ; say,
Did my lover pass this way ?

Thrushes joying in the tree
In a breezy melody ;

38 *THE LOVER IN THE WOODS.*

Squirrel, playing hide-and-seek,
 With abandon over-bold,
Scolding in coquettish freak,
 As sweet, teasing maidens scold ;
Grave and reticent cuckoo,
I expect the truth from you ;
Trees that peer into the skies ;
Ye are old and should be wise ;
By your screen of youngest leaves ;
By the shadow-dance it weaves ;
By your clinging vine-loves, say,
Will my lover come to-day ?

Mushrooms, toadstools, white and streaked,
Or with blistered venom freaked ;
Red and orange, umber-brown,
Clustered like an Indian town ;
Round nail-heads of mottled gray,
 Scattered in fantastic clumps
Where small mosses have their way

In the bole of earthy stumps,
Where the vine hath taken root
And the lichen set her foot ;
Owned by fairy-witches, all,
Springing at their midnight call,
In the moonlight or the shade,
Where the magic wand is laid ;
By your birth and passing, say,
Will our love so pass away ?

Restless streams that sob and fret
Like a child that has been sleeping,
Waking in a peevish pet ;
Till, beyond your boulders leaping,
And forgetting all your dole
In wild, whirling races, after
All your babbling breaks to laughter :
Then your mossy isles console ;
Then your pebble playthings please ;
And your dipping ferns appease :—

W.

S.

S.

A.

G.

By your eyes and smile, which
By your lips and your voice;
By your thoughts, as known
In a language all your own;
By your wings of passion, which
Will my heart be glad to-day.

And gaze sweetest, hidden words,
That the whole world's heart
And all my heart
Your eyes, and the happy heart
O my love, a heart of love and truth.

... with blistered
red and orange,
blistered like an
red nail-br
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"small"

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE MOCKING-BIRD.

(ON READING MR. MAURICE THOMPSON'S "BY-WAYS
AND BIRD NOTES.")

INTRODUCTION.

Would I might hear the nightingale !
But what can wishing so avail ?
Would I might hear the mocking-bird !

Or would that I, for once, had heard
The singers try a mellow strain,
The pipe and trill of the nightingale ;
The sylvan melody of the lark ;
The sweet, sweet melody of the lark ;
The delicate, delicate melody of the lark,
The delicate melody of the lark.

42 *NIGHTINGALE AND MOCKING-BIRD.*

Would I through verdurous ways might wend
Of some old forest that should blend
The charm of every clime ;
With tangled copse and open glade,
And spicy depth of denser shade ;
There lissome vines should droop and cling,
And clumps of musky blossoms swing ;
And there should play an idle breeze
To toss the bloom of scented trees ;
The day should shine without a stain,
With Eden weather come again.
Beneath a bower of jessamine,
With passion-flower and eglantine,
There, on the matted moss, to lie
And hear the pleasant rivalry.

THE MOCKING-BIRD.

Then first a liquid joy should float
From out the native wilding's throat,

NIGHTINGALE AND MOCKING-BIRD. 43

With frenzied eye, and quivering wing,
And passioned power that bird should sing;
With wild and mounting rhapsody
As though he pined to pierce the sky ;
And when the last full marvel fell
There should be silence like a spell.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

When time for brooding calm was o'er,
Then might the touching silence break,
With half a sob and half a song,
To bid such lovely echoes wake,
As never woke in wood before :
Then might the bird his trillets throng,
As though he must his thanks express
In a burst of tenderness.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE MOCKING-BIRD.

To crown my transport, at the end
These two one perfect song should blend ;

44 *NIGHTINGALE AND MOCKING-BIRD.*

And from a wild magnolia tree
Might steal the haunting melody.
So weirdly sweet the stream would swell
From minstrels warbling far too well—
Their thirst in harmony to slake,—
Sudden—the gentle hearts would break ;
And, with a mortal ecstasy,
In one long burst of rapture—die.

Perchance, what these, God-taught, had
 sung
Might loose, at last, my tuneless tongue ;
In such a spot, on such a day,
I, too, might sing my soul away.

LONELINESS.

A lily alone in a border of roses :

I saw her lean forward her beautiful head,
And the breezes were rich with the breath
of her longing,
Like sighs wafted o'er to the lily-bed.

There grew the bright lilies, the sweet,
golden lilies ;

They caught the warm light in each exquisite flower :
Did they catch the faint fragrance the
breeze wafted over ?
Did they dream of their mate in the roses'
bower ?

Alas ! the meek stranger, alone 'mid her
rivals !

I waited the end with a pitying eye ;
I saw her droop forward, away from the
roses,
And lean toward the lilies, and wither,
and die.

But when the last petal had faded and
fallen

Among the soft rose-leaves, blush, am-
ber, and red,
Did the free lily-spirit escape to her sisters ?
Did the breeze waft her o'er to the lily-
bed ?

ON THE ENDYMION OF KEATS.

Where art thou now, Endymion, where art
thou ?

The lovely vagrant Moon doth search for
thee,

Wand'ring the wide sky over, night by
night,

As lorn and pallid as a fading girl.

In vain her yuccas turn to bloomy
pearl,

Holding white goblets full of lustrous light
Caught from that argent wealth of radiancy :
Cloistered in cool magnolia shades, apart,
In vain her mocking-bird doth break his
heart,

With stress of passion, plaining, full of fire,
Wild music born of powerless desire.

[illegible]

Upon her Latmos vales she softly shone :
Softly she shone in those entrancing hours,
Her radiance tinged with rose, like laurel
flowers,

Not chastely cold as now, translucent, wan,
But flushed with love of thee, Endymion.

Ah ! for lost joy, and scent of fading rose ;
And tender memories at a sad life's close ;
And pain of lonely hearts, forlorn, bereft,
When one is taken and the other left :—

No more :—there is a silence in the years ;
And the old Moon recalls her youth with
tears.

TO A POET.

If thou art a poet-son of God
Fix upon the heights thy steadfast
glance ;
Listen with quick ear to catch His word ;
Speak, as He shall give thee utterance.

Speak what earth unseals to thee,
And the sky reveals to thee ;
What the hoarse wind shrieks ;
And the dark tide speaks ;
What the storm-clouds thunder
In their meeting crash ;
What—the lurid wonder
Of the lightning flash.

Why the strong sun sets
And the planets rise ;

Why the rainbow spans
The wet summer skies ;
What the forests utter,
With incessant sound ;
What the caverns mutter,
Rumbling underground.
What the crag reveals
Where man never trod :
What the abyss conceals
Of the ways of God.

What the eagle calls
To the wild glen :
What the waterfalls
Answer again.
What the snake hisses ;
What the wolf yells ;
What, to the nestling,
The owl's hooting tells.

What the hawk screameth
Over her nest :

What the heart dreameth
In mother's breast.

What the streams are gurgling
In a pleasant voice ;

Why the lambs are racing ;
Why the birds rejoice.

What thrushes sing to thee ;
What church bells ring to thee :

Why the flowers fade ;
Why the earthworm dies ;

While the chrysalids
Change to butterflies.

What the message of the rose,
Or the violet ;

Why each sweetest thing that grows
Is with tear-drops wet.

What the mind guesses,
Day after day,
Through dim recesses
Groping its way.
What the stars show
Each unto each ;
What the moon answers
In silver speech.
What of joy reaches thee ;
What thy pain teaches thee
That do thou teach.

Let thine inspiration,
Thy wisdom, be
What all God's Creation
Calleth to thee.

SONG.

*"Bind the sea to slumber stilly ;
Bind its odor to the lily ;
Bind the aspen ne'er to quiver,
Then bind love to last forever."*
—Moore.

Go tame the eagle of the crag ;
Go steal the sting from mortal pain ;
Go stand the broken water-flag
Erect upon her stalk again.

Restore the freshness of a flower ;
The glory of a cloud restore ;
Then force the passion of an hour
To fill the aching heart once more.

THE ROSES.

Down the lane wandered the maiden fair,
And plucked the wild roses, here and there.
Fair were the roses in their bloom ;
Fresh and sweet was their faint perfume :
She gathered the buds of the sweet-brier
wild,

And wreathed her flowers like a happy
child.

The finch sang softly, the thrush sang high,
The breezes murmured a low reply :
Flushed with bloom was the wild-rose tree,
Flushed with a lovelier bloom was she.

In the rose garden the maiden stands,
And twines the blossoms with loving hands.
Bright are the roses in their prime ;
Bright is the golden summer-time.

Golden the roses, golden the hours,
For Love has found her among the flowers.
She hears the red-bird call his mate ;
She hears the coo of the brooding dove ;
The oriole warbles his song, elate ;
And life is a golden dream of Love.

Down by the river at daylight's close,
The young girl sits with her lover there ;
Rich is the flush of the dark red rose
That is twined in the braids of her sunny
hair.

Sweet is the breath of the perfect flower ;
Sweet is her lover's raptured kiss ;
Her life is crowned with its perfect hour,
Her heart is thrilled with a perfect bliss.
Deep grow the shadows ; the air grows
chill ;
Weird is the cry of the whippoorwill.

White and silent the maiden lies ;
White and still is the shaded room ;
Closed to earth are her curtained eyes ;
Sweet is the air with a faint perfume.
White are the roses on her breast ;
White is the soul of the maid at rest ;
Drop a tear on her lovely brow ;
Naught of earth can stain her now.

Strew, where they lay her, the roses fair ;
Plant the wild sweet-brier at her head,
And let the golden roses, there,
Upon her grave their splendor shed ;
There let the deep-red roses glow ;
There let the lonely whippoorwill
Still, as the summers come and go,
With plaintive call the ether thrill ;
And plant the white rose on her breast,
Lovelier, purer, than all the rest.

A DAINTY FOP.

So jaunty, free and debonair,
And winning welcome everywhere,
A dainty fop has passed me by !
I did not see, but felt him nigh,
And though he dared to kiss my cheek,
He did not speak, he did not speak.

Shall I confess, beneath the rose,
A secret you must ne'er disclose,
That almost every summer day
This lover kisses me in play ?
But whence he comes, or where he goes
No mortal knows, no mortal knows.

A cultured taste in him I find,
And proof of an æsthetic mind ;

He winnows first the clover fields,
And next the rose aroma yields ;
Now who can tell me, from the scent,
Which way he went, which way he went ?

A connoisseur of rich perfumes,
To-day he steals from lilac blooms ;
To-morrow leaves the garden belles,
And flies to woodbine-scented dells ;
Who could resist the sighing swain,
Nor kiss again, nor kiss again ?

Like Psyche, in my arbors green
I wait for him I ne'er have seen ;
His fragrant breath betrays him nigh,
His fragrant breath and gentle sigh,
As though a burden on his breast
Was ne'er confessed, was ne'er con-
fessed !

To none is this gay rover true ;
He charms each day with odors new ;
But when, where hides the partridge vine
He finds the luscious eglantine,
And when for her he leaves the rest,
I love him best, I love him best.

TWILIGHT IN THE WOODS.

(AFTER THE SHOWER.)

The hour for praise has come again,
 Within these arches, tall and dim,
And all the forest is a fane,
 Where Nature sings her vesper hymn,
With birds and insects and the breeze
To join their glad solemnities.

Here, at the ending of the day,
The locust folds her leaves to pray ;
The bees that cheered her all day long,
Fly homeward with an even-song ;
The oak is at his orisons ;
The stream with whispered chanting runs ;

62 *TWILIGHT IN THE WOODS.*

The lady birch and alder trees
Do tell their beads like veiled nuns,
With hanging vines for rosaries ;
The flowers with meek petition rise,
And lift to Heaven appealing eyes ;
Sweet eyes, all dimmed with holy tears
To-morrow's sun will kiss away ;
Thus the sad spirit, worn with fears,
When darkness shrouds the glimmering
day,
Succumbs to weariness and pain,
To smile when sunlight comes again.

Now stirs the blast, and from each tree
Responds a murmured litany ;
Then silence,—till the reverent hush
Is broken by the tranquil thrush,
Fit preacher for these solitudes ;
Benignant hermit of the woods.

"Peace!" speaks the lofty bird. "Be still.
Learn loving, and the Maker's will."
His pulpit is an ancient tree,
Draped with large creepers decently ;
From which he cries his parting word :
" O holy, holy, holy Lord ! "

Follows, with tones of yearning love
The benediction of the dove ;
After—the service comes to end,
And on my homeward way I wend
As one who walks within the Veil,
Or sees, bright-orbed, the Holy Grail,
And feels as 't were an aureole
Of chastened rapture crown his soul.

SILENCE.

Come down from thine ærial height,
Spirit of the summer night !
Come softly stepping from the slender Moon,
Where thou dost lie upon her gentle
breast,
And bring a boon
Of silence and of solace for our rest.

Or lift us, lift our souls to that bright place,
Where she doth hide her face ;
Lap us in light and cooling fleece, and steep
Our hearts in stillness ; drench in drowsy
dreams ;
Grant us the pleasant languor that be-
seems,
And rock our sleep.

Quell thy barbed lightning in the sombre
west ;

Quiet thy thunder-dogs that bay the
Moon ;

Soothe the day's fretting, like a tender
nurse ;

Breathe on our spirits till they be in tune ;
Were it not best

To hush all noises in the universe,
And bless with solemn quietude, that thus
The still, small voice of God might speak
to us ?

AN IDLE DREAM.

O Mercury, lend me your twisted staff,
And lend me your wingèd shoon ;
For I would away, like a shooting-star,
To the other side of the moon ;
And find me a little wee world alone,
A tiny planet to call my own,
Where song-birds wanton, unscathed by
man,
And sing as never an earth-bird can ;
Where streamlets murmur : " Forget, forget ! "
And never a tear has fallen yet.

There would I fly in each vexèd mood,
To rest in the bosom of solitude.

On shell-pink blossoms at ease I 'd lie
While the young buds croon me a lullaby ;
There a rich accord is the voice of all,
And even the dew hath a silver fall.
There delicate beings of heavenly birth,
Too fair and fragile to live on earth,
Flit and flutter in airy play,
And laugh wild music the livelong day.

There fruit-trees cluster, and creepers twine,
And there would I mingle a nectar wine ;
And I would distil from the plants above
A powerful perfume and call it "Love."
Then gaily return to the world of men
And keep my secret from mortal ken ;
Up and down through the earth to go,
And ever a heavenly breeze should blow
And waft my perfume to each man's heart,
Till all should know of its cordial art ;

And loving-kindness and joy and rest
Should heal the sorrows of each man's
breast.

Then, Mercury, lend me your twisted staff,
And lend me your cap and shoon,
For I would away, like a shooting-star,
To the other side of the moon.

TO MEMORY.

Ah ! lovely lady with the stillest eyes ;
As sweet as Death 's ; deep as the summer sea ;
Just shaded by a downy cloud that lies,
White as a swan, between blue heaven
and thee :—
Thou lookest backward still, Mnemosyne.

Thy reveries are dear as poet's dreams ;
On childhood's innocence thou lov'st to dwell ;
On homely pleasures, and the simple themes,

And tender thoughts that youthful
mothers tell
To little children for a slumber-spell.

Yet I have known thee when thy mood
was black ;
When wild Regret had clutched thee as a
prey ;
And I have marked thee shudder, looking
back,
And turn thy strained and startled eyes
away
From some grim, muffled shape of cloudy
gray.

Sometimes I meet thee when the night is
clear,
For thou art Gossip to our Lady Moon,
Who liketh well thy plaintive voice to hear

Chanting low music of an ancient
rune

She sang before the worlds were out of
tune.

All things are softened through thy filmy
veil ;

In misty light a lovely landscape lies ;
Vistas of 'passing beauty, fading, frail,
Tinted with hues of Youth, and Love's
surprise,
And rainbowed with the tear-drops in
thine eyes.

I know thou makest many a holy hour
For those who look their lives of pa-
tience o'er ;
They love thee most who least have feared
thy power,

From whom thou dost inherit richest
store
Of pleasant days and deeds that are no
more.

Oft have I sought thee, pensive Memory,
where,
With Melancholy for thy handmaid meek,
Thou dost discourse with such a moving
air,
That I may only pray when I would
speak ;
For prayers are strength, though all my
words are weak.

GOLDEN-ROD.

She stood, the blooming flowers among,
When Spring's soft airs were whispering,
And all the woods were glad with song,
A poor, unsightly, weed-like thing.

The Summer, with her languid sigh,
Stole on and warmed the winnowing air,
And still the wild bee passed her by,
And still she grew, neglected, there.

All scattered lie the flowers of Spring ;
The Summer's early bloom is dead ;
The song-birds have forgot to sing ;
The thrush to other haunts has fled.

From whose
store
Of pleasant things
more.

Oft have I thought
How
How melancholy
Thou art, discourse

I may only
speak;
I may only

The soul that feared itself so poor,
Half doubtful of its ripening,—
When Autumn's sun hath warmed its core,
May bloom at last, a radiant thing.

AN AUTUMN ANNIVERSARY.

O Beauty, Beauty, thou wilt drive me mad !
Where shall I turn, or whither shall I
flee ?

Thou dost oppress the very soul of me
With hauntings of the dear delights I had.

In all the red and orange pomp I see,
In all the glory of the gold and green,
Naught but what is not, and what once
hath been,
And all the pain that is and should not be.

Alas ! alas ! by all our power of bliss ;
By all the fleeting splendor of the day ;
By the last rosy cloud that fades away ;
There is no sadder loveliness than this.

AN AUTUMN ANNIVERSARY. 77

O mist upon the valley, rise and rise,
And draw the moon within thy silver
fold;
The day of my despair is dead and
cold;
And all the stars are shining in the skies.

LET DOWN THE BARS.

I.

A WIFE SPEAKS.

It was upon an autumn day,
We trod the pasture fields
To gather golden-rod, and cull
The calm that twilight yields.

And we were lovers, he and I,
Though love was unconfessed ;
It was that thrilling, early time,
Of all Love's times the best.

And yet some careless word or look,
Some unconsidered tone,—

I know not what,—between us twain
A barrier had thrown.

We loitered by the old stone-wall
A moment, wistfully ;
He watched the clouds a space, and then
Let down the bars for me.

And up the windy hill we climbed,
And sought the mossy stone,
Where oft we came to watch the west,
But not the west alone.

He gazed as he would read my soul,
And I—the glowing skies,
But through and through, in every pulse
I felt those gazing eyes.

The sun had set, and yet—and yet—
We sat beneath the stars ;

80 *LET DOWN THE BARS.*

He stirred—his breath came fast—he
said :

“Sweet-heart, let down the bars.”

O Love ! it was thine hour of hours,
How swift, how strong thou art !
One word—just “Darling !”—trembled
forth,
And we were heart to heart.

The cricket at our happy feet,
How cheery was his strain !
How kindly looked the heavens down !
Looked up—the waiting plain !

And hand in hand we tread that plain
Beneath the watching stars ;
So near, so dear, our lives have grown,
There is no room for bars.

II.

A WOMAN THINKS.

O soul, to whom my soul was knit,
I know not where nor when ;
Towards whom I yearn, to whom I turn
From all the world of men!

By stirrings of a spirit power
That comes, I know not whence ;
By all the fine and subtle thrills
That rouse the slumbering sense ;

By all the conscious blood that springs
To light the changing cheek ;
By all the faltering, by the tones
Of all the words you speak ;

By what the searching eyes reveal,
When soul is finding soul ;

82 *LET DOWN THE BARS.*

When eager glances leap to meet,
And spurn the will's control.

By all the many signs of Love ;
By all Love's truth, I know
Your spirit cleaves to mine—and yet—
I pray you tell me so.

We meet by day, we part by night ;
We join our clinging hands ;
And still, between us and delight
A spirit barrier stands.

Alas ! these phantoms should not be,
That keep our souls apart ;
My friend, my lover, and my love—
Let down the bars, dear heart,

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM.

Where shone the bright moon brightest
 Upon the garden bed,
I saw the maiden whitest
 Uplift her dainty head.

Pale lay the Frost and paler
 The cheek that felt his kiss ;
As a white bride doth veil her,
 She veiled her brows with this.

Silent the withered garden,
 Strewed with the Frost-king's pelf,
Save where the owl, her warden,
 Hooteth to cheer himself.

84 *THE CHRYSANTHEMUM.*

Testing the high and lowly,
 Seeking for one most pure—
Only a virgin holy
 The Frost-kiss may endure—

Comes the still one and lingers
 Over the blooming bed,
Touching, with eager fingers,
 Every unguarded head.

All the impassioned flowers,
 Seared by his searching breath,
Blackened within their bowers
 In the long sleep of death.

Passionate kisses, killing,
 Fell on each glowing breast
Of the frail beauties, stilling,
 Lulling them into rest.

Saintly and still and queenly,
 Stands the white maiden there,
Wearing his gifts serenely,
 As maids their jewels wear.

She and the Frost, her lover
 In the soft sleeping light,
Of the pure moon above her,
 Watch through the waning night.

GOLDEN-ROD AND BITTER- SWEET.

With golden-rod in sunny glow
I decked, one day, my plain black dress ;
It seemed upon my face to throw
A reflex of its loveliness.

I felt the mantling color rise :
His guarded looks were grave, indeed ;
But there was something in his eyes,
A something that I dared not read.

Ah ! golden-rod, fair golden-rod,
You did not bloom in blooming spring ;
When lightly through the fields I trod ;
When violets were blossoming.

GOLDEN-ROD AND BITTER-SWEET. 87

Ah ! golden-rod, bright golden-rod,
 Why bloomed you not in blooming
 spring ?

You come too late in field and wood ;
 I dare not take the gift you bring.

I tore its beauty from my breast :
 I strewed its blossoms on the sod :
But tenderly I laid to rest,
 In keeping safe, its slender rod.

Ah me ! how golden was its glow :
 It lighted up my sombre dress,
And seemed upon my life to throw
 A reflex of its loveliness.

One brought me bitter-sweet that day ;
 “ Alas ! ” I cried, “ the gift is meet.”
I threw the golden-rod away,
 And now I wear the bitter-sweet.

SIDNEY LANIER.

Dear brother, thou who grandly did'st aspire
To holy beauty, yet did'st meek obey
The voice from heaven that called thee
"Come up higher";
Thou who our listening hearts did'st
greatly sway
With magic of thy flute-toned, artful lay:
When, like thy Master, thou wast "clean
forespent,"
Laid'st calmly down thy clear-voiced in-
strument.
How grandly now thy spirit, with no clod
Of frail and feeble flesh to hold her back,
Will follow through eternity thy God
In his vast, glorious, and harmonious
track!

TO MY COMRADE TREE.

*"The tree is grown that shall yield to each
. . . his last 'narrow house and dark.'"—
Country Parson.*

Remote in woods where thrushes chant ;
Or on some lonely mountain's slope ;
Or in a copse, the cuckoo's haunt ;
With fingers pointing to the cope,
There stands a tree, there stands a tree,
Must fall before they bury me.

O waiting heart, where'er thou art,
At last thy dust with mine shall blend ;
For though we spend our days apart
We come together at the end ;
And thou with me, and I with thee,
Must lie in perfect unity.

Within a cramped confine of space,
And owning naught of earth beside,
That heart must be my dwelling-place
For whom the world was not too wide.
A new-time Dryad, mine must be
The shape that shall inhabit thee.

Perchance in some lone wandering
On thy old roots I may have lain,
And heard, above, the wood-birds sing,
While God looked down upon us twain;
And did I feel no thrill, with thee,
Of fellowship and sympathy?

Is thy strong heart ne'er wearied out
With standing 'neath the over-freight
Of boughs that compass thee about,
With mass of green, or white, a-weight?
O patient tree! O patient tree!
Dost never long for rest, like me?

I know thou spreadest grateful shade
When fierce the noon-tide sun doth
beat ;
And birds their nests in thee have made,
And cattle rested at thy feet :—
Heaven grant I make this life of mine
As beautiful and brave as thine !

And when thy circling cloak is doffed
Thou standest on the storm-swept sod,
And liftest thy long arms a-loft
In mute appealing to thy God :
Appeal for me, appeal for me,
That I may stand as steadfastly.

Let me fulfil my destiny
And calmly wait for thee, O friend !
For thou must fall, and I must die,
And come together at the end ;

To quiet slumbering addressed :
Shut off from storm, shut in for rest.

Thus, lying in God's mighty hand
While his great purposes unfold,
We 'll feel, as was from Chaos planned,
His breath inform our formless mould:
New shape for thee, new life for me,
For both—a vast eternity.

LISTEN.

O listen, listen, while I plead with you !
The day is softly resting from its care ;
The evening wind is breathing out a
prayer ;
The cloudy forms of spirits crowd the blue.

Thin spirit forms that let the glory
through,
With outstretched hands are swimming
from the west ;
One wears the crescent moon upon his
crest,
And all are dropping blessings down on
you.

They drop as gently as the dropping dew :
Dear love, dear love, for all that I would
say,
There is no fitter place, no fairer day ;
O listen, listen, while I plead with you.

SAPPHIRES.

TENDERNESS AND TRUTH.

The opal hath a baleful gleam,
And sheds a spectral light ;
Like a weird moonbeam on a turbid stream
Where witches dance by night.

The restless ruby decks the breast
Of many a weary one ;
But I seem to see in its sorcery
Heart's blood congealed to stone.

The icy diamond dazzleth me
With its glittering, soulless light ;
Like a vessel's wake o'er a freezing lake,
Too pitilessly bright.

The topaz hath a yellow flash,
Like the eye of a savage thing ;
And the pallid pearl is a fragile girl,
Who fades ere blossoming.

Green emeralds for a diadem
Cast but a sickly hue,
But sapphires have a tender light,
And mirror heaven's blue ;
So crown my queen with the sapphire's sheen,
For my queen is tender and true.

CONFLICT.

Flushes of dawn that wither into gray ;
Hints of sunrise that fade to moonrise
pale ;
Beginnings of bright song that die away ;
Blight of half-opened blossoms, slim and
frail.

Looks of wild longing, sad, impassioned,
dumb ;
Strength of endeavor foiled by callous
Fate ;
Sore shrinking from the empty years to
come ;
Then the dark vigil, grim and desolate.

“ Ah ! for one draught of Joy’s delicious
cup ;
One dance with Pleasure wreathed by
flower and vine ;
Ah ! for a feast where Love and I might
sup,
And pledge each other in Youth’s golden
wine.”

Inner revolting full of fiery pain ;
Dull stretch of duty done in bitter
stress ;
The foot-sore journey o’er the weary plain ;
And the long fasting in the wilderness.

Then the strong drink of victory over
self ;
The deep’ning glow of Faith’s rekindled
fire ;

The crisis past ; the slow return to health ;
The birth of Hope ; the death of starved
Desire.

And, at the last, to lie as on a breast
Rocking to slumber, till the sighing
cease ;
Then the still voice of Death shall mur-
mur, " Rest " ;
But Some One just beyond shall answer,
" Peace."

THE CHAIN.

O my Spirit, dost thou hear it,
Softly beating in the brain ?
Dost thou hear the hammer forging
All the rivets of a chain ?

In thy youth the links were golden,
With a flowered device inwrought,
And they joined thy hands with Pleasure
As she danced away from Thought.

Dost thou hear it beating, beating,
In the lonely chamber still ;
Forging silver, gold, or iron,
At the master-workman's will ?

Is it forming leaden fetters
That shall drag thee down to lie
In the cells of Desolation,
With Despair for company?

Let the fire be hot within thee,
Till it melt the linkèd chain
That would bind thy life in prison
With Remorse and Sin and Pain.

And may Love, the skilled mechanic,
Deftly ply his cunning art ;
Beating out the precious metal
On the anvil of the heart.

Till the finished work appeareth
Light and supple as a thread,
Yet with strength to lift thee, Spirit,
To thy birthright overhead.

THE HERMIT KNIGHT.

In a shaggy forest I know a glen,
Where the were-wolf made his lair ;
'T was haunted of owls, but 't was shunned
of men,
For a demon dwelleth there.
When the night was dismal and wild and
wet,
And yells were on the gale,
I rode a black steed to the glen and met
That demon, grisly pale.

I sprang from my charger where he stood,
And I hailed the spectre dire :—
The ground was rank with a smell of
blood,
And hot with a smouldering fire :—

I called him by his loathly name,
Unmeet for a mortal ear,
And I saw his face by a sudden flame
Lurid with hate and fear.

I plucked the fiend by his long right
hand,
As he sat on a corse, new-slain,—
My voice was strong with a firm command :
“I have sought thee once again ;
Show me to-night, show me to-night
What thou may'st not keep from me.”
His coward eye it was hellish bright,
With a glare not good to see.

My shivering steed he pawed the moss ;
His gasps began to fail :
By a murdered corse, and a dying horse,
I heard that goblin's tale ;

But never a spirit that skims the sea,
 Nor a phantom of the air,
 Must guess what the foul fiend whispered
 me,
 Nor dream what he showed me there.

I had power, I had power in that awe-
 some hour,
 And I read his spirit through ;
 I made him cringe, and I made him cower,
 For my heart was brave and true.
 I chained him there with a new-forged
 chain,
 By the side of the murdered wight,
 And I left him howling a wilder strain
 Than the howling of the night.

For ten long years on a mountain bare
 I had wept and fasted sore ;

I had worn the stones with my knees in
prayer,
To conquer a grace the more ;
And to weave a spell for a fiendish heart,
A spell for a fiendish will ;
To baffle the spite of a demon's art
I dwelt on the doleful hill.

He may harm no hapless passer-by ;
He may spread nor ban nor bale ;
I had strength and wisdom from One on high,
And my courage did not fail.
I won my will, for my soul was pure,
And the secret that I know
Hath given me power great ills to cure
As I journey to and fro.

Go not that way ; it is haunted still ;
The wolf has left his lair ;

The owls have flown to my barren hill ;
No living thing is there ;
A murdered corse by a blackened stone,
'Neath an oak-tree, gnarled and gray,
And a frenzied demon, alone, alone,
Till the earth shall pass away.

THE ANGELS' SONG.

Tell me, ye shepherds of the dewy plain,
What time the starry courts ærial rang
With rapture of the loud, seraphic strain ;
Did naught remain ?
Did no heart learn the song the angels
sang ?

On the long slope beside the plashèd pool,
Guarded by stunted thorn-trees, flaked with
wool,
Where the sheep came to quench their
seldom thirst :—
O favored pool, that in thy tranquil space
Mirrored that night each rapt, immortal
face
When on the drowsy ear the anthem burst ;

And the strong seraphs hymned, in sacred
joy,

Their glorious pæan to the Holy Boy !
Was there no tuneful shepherd, nice of ear,
Who caught the lilt of that celestial art,
And ever more could hear

The mellow chorus singing in his heart ?
In retrospective mood,
On home-made strings, or on the timbrel
rude,

Could strike again
The music that the angels sang to men,
The music that high Heaven gave to
earth,
To celebrate the crownèd Saviour's birth ?

Through a long life one kept each perfect
tone,

And musing, made the melody his own :

Then, in the tempest times that swept the
land,

And scattered far and wide the shepherd
band,

One, seamed with grief and eld, and hoary
grown,

Still sat, as erst, upon the accustomed stone,

When came again the night of all the
year ;

Again upon the consecrated ground,

With sons and grandsons reverent around,

Whose Christ-filled hearts His love had
tuned to hear :—

“Sing us, O shepherd, that angelic air !”

Then flowed the cadenced heavenly har-
mony

From out a soul grown beautiful thereby ;

While the hushed group were gazing on the
sky

As though they heard a seraph shout
aloud,
From the white bosom of a moon-lit cloud,
The holy song whose echoes shall not
cease,
The song of peace.

THE END.





